

Reflecting on the Future of Video

Tom Sherman, 1991 Ottawa

Note: While going through a stack of texts I had written and published in magazines and journals since 1983, I discovered the attached previously unpublished text: "Reflecting on the Future of Video" (1991). I was commissioned to write this text for an anthology on independent video by Rene Baert, a Montreal-based curator and editor. The anthology never materialized due to lack of funds. All writers were paid, but the texts were still-born. This text speculates on the future of video in the late nineties (today!). So in a way it is now a video history text. Since this is the video history list (vidhist channel) [a listserv established by the Experimental TV Center in 1997-1998 to assist with organization of Video History: Making Connections, a conference held at Syracuse University in October 1998 and the Video History Website], I thought it might interest some of you. The original context is a bit different (not NY state). It speculates on a video future in Canada, where "video art" encompasses both art and socio-political tapes and of course funding is still relatively abundant--although this was written at the end of the second of two terrible recessions in a decade's span. It gets a bit desperate at the end. Partly this was meant to be humorous, but when you've been freelancing for a number of years one's humor turns very black indeed. With this said I offer you its contents. I haven't changed a word...

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IT'S COLD AT NIGHT

It's after midnight on a cold winter's night in Ottawa, towards the end of 1991. The apartment is quiet except for traffic noise which drifts in from a distance through the open window in my studio. Both my loved ones cough periodically from their respective bedrooms. A lingering flu-bug takes away from their rest. I have a mirror in my studio and find some humour in watching myself grapple with the ideas in this developing text.

I stare at a video-score pinned on the wall above my desk between these thoughts. I've always blocked out the timing of tapes in drawings and diagrams before shooting and editing. The more video comes to resemble music in terms of composition and movement, it makes more and more sense to score it like music. I've been at this video business for over twenty years now. Things have changed a lot since the early 70's--and yet nothing has really changed at all. Video as an art medium still has a tremendous, largely unrealized potential. Despite its continuing shortcomings, video is still the medium of choice of many artists. There are a lot more artists working with video today. There are hundreds, maybe over a thousand now. Tens of thousands of hours of video art have been recorded since we started using video to make art. We've made a valiant, concerted effort to lay claim to a technological domain which has expanded beyond our wildest dreams. Video, the technology once rare, is common today. But the audience for video art hasn't grown dramatically. Video artists and their limited audience still make up a very small aspect of today's expanding video environment.

Video art is a very small business sector when compared with the broader field of music video, instructional video, real estate video and all those things which are now called video--video movies and laser disks, home video, desk-top video, computer games, etc. If anything, video art makes up a smaller share of the total video environment today than it did in the days when the technology was truly a novelty. In fact, in the early seventies, when video art was a strange anomaly within and in parallel to the post-

secondary educational system, artists seemed to be the only professionals who could make the medium live up to its then severely limited potential.

I think of video as a technology, as an art form and as an environment in which I have worked and will continue to work. I am an optimist, believing as I do that video will continue to offer a more and more enlightened machine-enhanced perspective of the world we live in. I am frustrated by the current shortcomings of today's video reality while admitting that I am continually intoxicated by the medium's fantastic potential power. I have bonded with a particular machine for life and wish to continue to develop within this relationship.

VIDEO IS A MACHINE

Video as a technology is always changing, advancing. Professional technologists, the engineers, perceptual/behavioural psychologists, market analysts and designers determine the rate of change and the very nature (physical characteristics) of the machine itself. These professionals are paid to develop the technology of video by the shareholders of multi-national corporations. Profit motivates machine development. Machines can be developed only as quickly as the market will bear. The consumers have to adapt to the changing nature of the machines. Relationships have to be continuously upgraded. If the relationships between people and machines become meaningless and unsatisfying, there will be psychological and economic disfunction.

Artists are professional developers of the technologies they employ. As artists must gain access to video technology to make video, we become the quintessential 'prosumers'. Artists team-up with engineers, perceptual/behavioural psychologists, market analysts and designers as professional technology developers. Artists find themselves in the ranks of those serving the interests of the stockholders of multinational corporations, continuing to develop the technologies for tomorrow's prosumers. As perceptual and social 'scientists' we employ ourselves not for the profit of the shareholders of the multinationals, but towards our own gains. While the contribution by artists is equal to, if not greater than that of other types of professionals on salary, we are not rewarded directly by the corporations financially. This is so because we insist on determining our own set of goals, methodologies of production and pace of development. In some cases we are way out ahead (artists are unrealistic in the demands they put on the technology) and sometimes we insist on applying the brakes (artists respond in a reactionary manner, insisting that the technology be used only as it has been in the past).

Today video is a ubiquitous, arguably transparent technology. It is commonplace everywhere and offers the individual the virtual potential to be everywhere. While this virtual potential is alluring, offering a dream of electronic dissemination far exceeding reality—however unrealistic—video does encourage us to cross disciplinary boundaries, to work with others, to expand beyond ourselves.

The video machines themselves are becoming more sophisticated. Today's machines are more demanding within our person/machine relationships. We all form relationships with the machines we use for 'reading and authoring' the world. It is possible to develop a social-psychology of person/machine relationships. Our relationships with our machines are changing. On the one hand they are easier to use. But as video and computers and laser technologies merge in the digital age we are forced to expand our perception of context. I here define context simply as the territory within which we must work. We once were able to think of our territory as a discrete system of video machines connecting us to an audience. This was the only real territory we had to work with. Video as a worksite is far more extensive today. The video domain now includes aspects of the media environment which video artists once considered peripheral to their video-biased scope of vision. In the strict definition of hardware, video is becoming peripheral to the digital computer. Video is now commonly defined as the input (camera) and output

(monitor) peripherals of the digital processor. One day everyone's relationship with video will be a relationship with a video-computer. The idea of video as a peripheral is now part of a relationship artists share with the intelligent artifact itself, that external representation of our intelligence, the artificially intelligent computer. I sometimes think we live in a vast domain of integrated communications systems tied together in homage to the very concept of artificial intelligence. As the territory has become far more extensive and complex, we find that we have been marginalized as specialized artists who capture images with a video camera.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO CHANGE

Change is constant with all communications technologies. These technologies are never fully developed. There are no finished products. Technological development is a process driven by both those who design and use the gear. Video is an information machine, a communications device, an extension of our bodies, our societies and our reality. Video information is transformed by all those who use it. Video is worthless unless it is exchanged, or more importantly, used. Video is a manifestation of electric speed and power. Video is a vast source of memory. Video is seductive on both sides of the chip. The cameras and monitors and the processors in between are instruments for transforming the world within reach of our eyes and ears.

ACCESS, ACCESS, ACCESS...

Before I stroke the keys more towards a description of our common video domain, let me return to the predicament of artists working with video in the late 20th Century. Video artists face a set of problems universal to all contemporary artists, regardless of the media and technologies they choose to employ. These challenges can be summarized as the perpetual problems of access. These universal problems will dominate our future. Access means the availability of anything which will allow us to achieve our goals. Video artists need access to the time and financial resources necessary to make their art. Video artists need access to the technology itself. Video artists, like all other artists, need access to an audience. Access to these necessities must be earned and secured through a sustained intellectual, emotional and political struggle.

The first challenge for any artist is to find a way to exist as an artist. How does one find a way to make a living without compromising one's ability to make art? This is of course a universal problem ad infinitum

which remains fundamental to those having chosen the profession. Some way must be found to have the time to think clearly, to observe, to question the society at large. At issue is the quality of life itself. The rent or mortgage must be met, food must be put on the table, bills paid, means of transportation and communications secured, a community formed, friendships made and maintained, vices controlled, desires satisfied and love found.

Psychoeconomic factors at the heart of the artist's day to day existence are even more important than cash economics. I use the notion of psychoeconomics to introduce concerns of quality of life from the perspective of the artist. Psychoeconomics is the study of how economic conditions affect the psychological state of the individual. This goes beyond whether or not the artist is worried about money or issues of class. Psychoeconomics are also based on the individual's ability to give and the capacity to be influenced by others. Artists have traditionally valued their independence beyond anything else. Independence is measured in degrees of freedom balanced against acceptable levels of responsibility and the absolute necessities of compromise. Artists are generous only when they have achieved a certain measure of security, which is attainable only if they have received recognition from those they respect.

If we consider these general indicators of emotional and intellectual well-being within the context of a specific professional community, such as video artists, it is possible to predict a conformist behaviour in the video art field. Self esteem depends on maintaining a presence in that aspect of the media environment which guarantees recognition by a respected community of interest. Artists tend to cluster in peer groups with other artists who share the same values. Other related professionals--administrators, critics, curators, academics, programmers, distributors--flesh out these communities of interest, each maintaining their own professional alliances. The video art community is an international community of interest which functions like any other professional community with shared goals. Individuals and small companies are linked through institutions, events and documentation. Recorded video information is exchanged through the mechanisms of personal correspondence, video publications, screenings, exhibitions, festivals, cablecasts and broadcasts. There are professional newsletters, magazines and books which substantiate video information exchange in print and still photography.

POOR VIDEO ARTISTS

The economic reality of the video art business has always been and remains pretty grim. Competition is fierce--the rewards are meager. Video art is an information commodity stuck in no man's land as a perishable good with marginal distribution. While the new economists of the information age sing the praises of creativity, there are virtually no public or private resources forthcoming to cultivate demand for video art. Thus the audience is nurtured at a snail's pace. Video art rots with its tape stock on the shelves of selected archives. Video art history is no different from other studies of our disposable image culture. Like film, television, sound recordings and radio, the study of such perishable information goods is usually conducted within the stable confines of print, supplemented by still photography. Today's computer databases list titles and general descriptions of what amount to a skeletal, text-based index of productions. Organizing video information by descriptive text index, while obviously very important, is but the first step.

Commercial media sectors, such as the music recording industry, have the means to revitalize and exploit their artists' past accomplishments. But the history of video art must still be cryptically perceived through oblique references offered by this year's tapes. An astute, informed viewer may pick up references in new tapes to previous video works. In fact, video art is a series of statements by 'authors' aware of the 'literature' of the field. In the absence of serious written criticism on video art, artists in the field tend to make critical, aggressive tapes which are designed to challenge positions established by previous video works. Video by artists is not designed to serve an audience the way commercial or educational media are. Rather than give an audience what they want or what they need, the artist offers a personal communicate, a statement of individual concerns, beliefs--a kind of declaration of independence. The cost of this independence is high. Even today, in a time widely perceived as the video age, there is no way an artist can make a living based solely on the sale of his or her video art.

The video art business operates on the principle of pure information exchange. The exchange of video art in 1991 constitutes an advanced information micro-economy. Video recordings are exchanged between individuals, small companies and institutions, primarily in video-for-audience transactions. There are small financial transactions tied to these video-for-audience exchanges, but to date the modest cash income tied to video exchange disappears quickly as it is applied against far greater expenses of production and distribution. The video art commodity is typically financed by the artist (the entrepreneur) through government grants and/or the investment of major equipment manufacturers (most commonly the temporary loan of equipment). No matter what the perspective of analysis, it can be safely stated that financial exploitation of video by artists, distributors and exhibitors has been minimal to date considering the actual volume of video information exchanged for audience over the first twenty years of medium's history.

DEGREES OF INFLUENCE

The rewards for the primary information providers are measured largely in terms of effect. Artists intend to affect change through their video works. Return on investment is measured in terms of influence. The attractiveness of the medium is essentially its power of influence. Artists strive for a presence in the video environment, hoping to shift the perceptual or conceptual base of the audience or to contribute to a transformation of psycho-societal norms. The individual who chooses to negotiate reality through the production of video is generally someone who wants to affect change. The medium (video used by individuals or groups of individuals to affect change) is not well suited for engineering social stability. In this respect video is the present and future antithesis of television. Video will clearly emerge as the third aspect of our predominant media triumvirate: cinema/TV/video. Television will continue to rule with cinema as its past and video as its future. Video will transform television over time. Video will continue to be distinguished from television by individuals until the medium is perceived to be the quintessential representative form of the individual. Video will most likely share audience with the novel, short story and literary essay in the future. Today's video by artists allows a community interested in change to anticipate and preview the way the individual will negotiate reality in the future.

Given this outline of the psychoeconomic factors affecting the video artist, it is possible to project general expectations of behaviour for the near future. Artists will continue to use video as a catalyst for change. The medium's proven effectiveness in presenting alternative models of socio-political theory and practice will not be overlooked in the years to come. The video documentary, including a variety of 'docu-drama' forms, will continue to interest artists obsessed with reforming their socio-political reality. Let's call these kind of artists social reformists. Their video will continue to oppose the predominate ideology of television, although a legitimate concern for message clarity and accessibility will result in programming virtually indistinguishable from commercial and educational broadcast media. The social reformists will attempt, through the use of appropriated video formats, to propagate different values to an audience considered to be poorly served by commercial and educational television. Thus the social reformists will

continue to build minority cultures from scratch, using video to establish communities of interest in an era of social fragmentation and alienation. Another kind of video artists, let's call them the individualists, will concurrently persevere in their efforts to distinguish themselves as unique individuals against the orthodoxy of individualism portrayed in the dominate forms of commercial television and cinema. While this personal activity will be perceived as being counterproductive by the majority of video artists, namely the social reformists, it is the elemental breeding ground of fresh, new programming trends. The only way to capture larger audiences without industrial scale financing is through creativity. Literature (writing and publishing) provides us with a hint of this opportunity today. Small literary presses, journals and magazines, although threatened by rising costs, point to a necessary future development in the video domain. Video publishing will inevitably replace the small literary press.

A HISTORY OF HANDS-ON RELATIONSHIPS

None of this expected behaviour will occur if artists fail to continue to secure access to video technology. If we consider the history of the medium, access to equipment is less of a problem today than it was a couple of decades ago. Artists have generally had to work with equipment on the bottom-end of commercially available technology.. When I started making video the bottom-end was 1/2" reel-to-reel. State of the art equipment was 2" broadcast gear. The technical discrepancies between these formats were absolutely debilitating. Video dubbing or editing across formats was rarely possible technically. Video recordings played back on someone else's 'compatible' machine would rarely provide a stable image. There were no reliable edit-controllers in those days. Colour 1/2" video wasn't available until 1973, after six years of black and white instability. Playback decks and decent monitors were scarce.

Conditions improved gradually over the 1970's. 3/4" video became the bottom-end compromise to high priced Betacam and 1" professional gear. The relatively recent development of 1/2" consumer VCR's and camcorders and, more recently, the dramatic emergence of 8mm consumer video have given a lot of us reason to be optimistic about the future. The technological infrastructure of video has developed far more quickly than many of us had originally imagined it would.

Today most artists are still working on the bottom-end. So everything has changed and nothing has changed. But today's bottom-end is like the Cadillac of the late 1960's. Our tapes can now be played back on literally millions of playback systems worldwide and most of the time the replayed recordings are pretty true to master quality. Image and sound quality is still limited by production/post-production budgets, but we are no longer strangled at every juncture by erratic machines. Government grants are now used to buy our way into the future--everybody seems to be 'bumping up' recordings or making special efforts to climb the ladder to technical formats on the top-end. Of course today's high tech is tomorrow's bottom-end. The ladder is a treadmill. We have survived to see desk-top video publishing. Personal computers now process video signals. Video images can be 'written' in software. The video camera can be and is considered by many to be a peripheral device. Our computer-video signals can be stored on disk or tape and played back on our neighbour's televisions with stereo sound. Our camcorders are now truly functional in low light and they are physically lightweight enough to be comfortably hand-held for shooting. Artists will always want a better image with the most natural sound. We want digital video and know it is just around the corner. We want more precise control over our video image and audio. We want to be able to reproduce our tapes without amplifying or introducing noise. We want access to the best that money can buy and we want to use the prototypes too. In the future we will find a way to get our hands on the best technology available today. By the time video artists satisfy their current demands, today's best gear will be tomorrow's bottom-end.

BE PREPARED TO STAY IN SCHOOL FOREVER

All of this 'progress' forces the artist to upgrade his or her skills continuously. Continuous education replaces continuing, periodic re-schooling. The machines advance into states of increasing complexity and power, committing those who follow to an exhausting cycle of skill development. Those who choose to run along for a full revolution always find themselves back where they started. This is the machine's most basic philosophy course (10101010101). Progress always has its downside and the conclusion of any race is a return to the starting line. The digital revolution will certainly be interesting to watch. Analog wave forms will be cut into bits only to be reassembled analogically again. I'm sure there will be nursery rhymes written about such remarkable transformations. Our children will write them for their children's children. Tomorrow's digital children will continue to sing new versions with imperfect voices, until their throats are upgraded. Learning is easy when you are young. Running along with the new technologies will bring us full circle. In my youthful muse I remain optimistic.

The final challenge is the greatest access problem, that of audience. The access problem of problems is the challenge of finding an audience. If the video artist could reach the potential audience for his or her medium, access to time, resources and technology would take care of themselves. This is surely the end-zone where psychoeconomics and cash economics converge incoherently. The individual artist's drive for social integration, manifest in reaching an audience through media, is synonymous with and bounded by concepts as broad as the life force of circulation in the body or the constant transformation of energy in the universe. The ultimate frustration of working with an unlimited multiple form like video is to find one's recorded information decaying on the shelf unused. But then again, most video art works by individualists appear to be designed to function as anti-information. I am thinking along the lines of a mixed analogy, comparing underground video with ideas put forth by nuclear theorists. If we consider the general opposition by video artists' to television, the mass circulation of standard programming forms,

it is possible to assign value to static, apparently dysfunctional video- information forms. Individualist video art is particularly convincing as anti-information when compared to the unrelenting conformity of television. Given the generally negative view of television expressed by its regular viewers (most think TV is a waste of time), how long can video anti-information remain so ridiculously undervalued? If government would only tell people that watching too much TV is a bad thing...it will make them sick.

It is possible to imagine a video-information dead-zone (dead only for the time being) stocked by society's forgotten fringe celebrating the formal, however subconscious awareness of their death wish. The present and projected capacity of this video dead-zone would seem to be virtually unlimited given the current modest rate of input by video artists. This negative concept of zone capacity might be as abstract (and as useless) as an inconceivably immense field of unaddressed memory.

WHAT AUDIENCE?

I would like, for somewhat perverse reasons, to introduce the audience for video at this point. What is needed is an audience which can explore the depth's of the video dead-zone. In these days of early exploration and development, the organizers and cataloguers will have to suffice as the video artists' primary audience. These primary, pioneering researchers will quietly mine the resource and provide their findings to the institutions they serve. The role of the researcher is to recover through excavation. Institutions then frame the specimens and diffuse their value to their respective audiences.

The principle researchers at this time are the artists, curators and archivists who follow a natural drive to know and associate with the work of contemporary artists. In all three of the above professions, we find the majority conducting their research with at least one foot anchored inside an institution. Artists in their artist- run centres, curators in their galleries or museums and archivists in the archives or libraries are generally employed to conduct research and to order and publish their findings for the benefit of their respective audiences. Unfortunately, the bureaucracies of any of these institutions, including the publishers and the cablecasters/broadcasters, are preoccupied with maintaining and increasing the size of their established audiences.

Anytime anyone introduces new information to an audience there is going to be resistance. Compounding this natural conservatism is the reactionary stance of the critics. The critic serves the audience by reinforcing its fear and rejection of the new forms of art/information. Criticism has its own script and its authors are intolerant of activity which doesn't fit the mold. Recognized artists should be consistent and aberrant gestures by both young and mature artists will be ignored. Video made by individuals for individuals presents new problems for audiences attracted by other means. There are standards of presentation to be upheld and there are programming demands made everyday by audiences already established and served. Video art is designed to accelerate psychological and social change. The medium is a major information platform for presenting opposing views. Its producers, as in information producers, produce anti-information for a sub-culture, call it the art world or the community served by cultural workers and also seek recognition somewhat paradoxically from institutions which have established audiences through other strategies. The status an institution offers is in fact determined by its audience. Established audiences want tolerable variations of the kind of programming which attracted them in the first place. The notions of status advanced by the establishment must be transformed and new institutions must be struck. Meanwhile video, the technology, continues to advance as an indispensable, cost effective audio/visual peripheral technology. The equipment inventories in all manner of institutions are swelling. The new buildings are laid on a foundation of fibre optic cables linking an architecture of future viewing areas.

ANTI- INFORMATION FOR THE ANTI-SOCIAL

The largest audience doesn't go out at all. There are more and more display/playback machines in people's homes. Networking by computer is raging on, unregulated. The audience for television, video and computer services prefers to stay home. Who is going in after them? First, everyone who can afford to spend a buck to make a buck is going to try to enlist the home audience first. The next people in will be those obsessed with influence itself. The peddlers of pure influence, those not suited to mainstream politics, will have to wait for the information utilities to develop further before prices come down to permit entry at their level of financing. In the meantime, everyone wants the audience to visit their place, to hear their music, to read their books, to feel the power of their machines. All everyone wants is some attention and a chance to influence someone. Video artists compete with everyone for audience.

The before mentioned video dead-zone itself has an established audience of sorts, archivists and librarians, although it's hard to imagine an audience which is less exploitive. Of course it's difficult for archivists and librarians to find the time and resources necessary to exploit the vitality of the public and private holdings they manage. Shelf-life is hardly a dynamic life force until it is tapped. Unfortunately, forgotten video programs are not going to go out to find a new audience by themselves. A new audience can breathe life into something off the shelf only if they have been given guidance on how to apply their minds to the task. But when will a major home audience, like the television audience, move in the direction of video art?

Future demand for video information of all kinds is a given. Consumer and professional investment in hardware is growing at phenomenal rates and will slow only if the human race vanishes from the face of the earth. The technological infrastructure is developing relentlessly, inevitably. Electrical power continuously supports strict routines of exposure to an awesome stream of signals, symbols and noise. We watch and re-watch. We drink the image-brew which is our daily flow of information. Media information received within the physical context of our living space has virtually become the sum total of our reality. Finding those of common mind over distance is our life's work. Controlling how we are represented in media is essential to our survival. There are others like you out there. Video is an appropriate technology for this communications mission. The video-computer is an even more effective device. Digital video storage and the power of digital indexing techniques (for assigning the very act of composition over to the viewer through interactive systems) will certainly prepare us for our initial contact with the larger audience. The new viewers will be very demanding. How will we meet their ongoing demands after we have managed to attract their attention?

Given the radical evolution of the technological environment, it is possible to foresee a period of time where real changes take place—where the potential of technological innovation (opportunities for new behaviour) overwhelms the natural human trait of apathy and the species' general tendency to resist anything introduced by strangers. In the late-1990's video art (diverse programming produced by individuals who strive for change) will finally be exploited commercially by middlemen and middlewomen to a significant degree. The home audience, by that time, will be fragmented into minute, personal internalized communities of selves (such complex individuals can call upon a range of personalities to match up with different viewpoints and perspectives in programming). The elderly, if they have managed to maintain sharp memories, are a marvelous potential audience, because they have experienced more and have that real sense that they have been a very different person in the past. They may feel they have been several different people over the years. Although I recognize the tendency in older people to be who they are and nobody else, I do believe they can be put in a position where they will be stimulated again by the rich psychological histories of their lives. If I am right, there will be strong demand for works which elicit multiple perspectives, formed over longer and longer stretches of time.

THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

My instincts tell me to keep producing video. I need to secure my own address on the information platform of tomorrow. The audience will come around when they can relate to my message. I have been patient. There is too limited a demand for anti-information today, but the audience's receptivity to change is increasing. The purveyors of redundant, standard forms are unwittingly creating an appetite for alternatives. The relentless proliferation of machines is also fueling this demand. Steady increases in channel capacity provide additional room for aberrant behaviour and ultimately encourage program diversity. If you sell people machines which promise the freedom to create and choose their own information, some of them are going to hold you to it.

In the short term I'll shoot for the attention of aging and elderly women. I think older women are more open than men to different ways of thinking and seeing the world. I'm talking about women from 56 to 78. In this age group the younger one's are still likely to be living with semi-conscious men who are attached to a second TV and different programming (mostly sports) in another room. The older one's, if not in an old age home, generally live alone (having survived beyond their mates) or with their children. Their children are already middle-aged. Their children are in the what is called the early aging block. This middle-aged audience will watch more and more video as its members age and become less physically active. Information will be as basic a good as food and shelter to this maturing audience. A good percentage of disposable income will be set aside for things to watch. An army of video producers will be needed to keep these people amused and signed up to information services for life. The same old forms of programming will fail to maintain established audiences for the long haul. Programming must grow in complexity to serve a maturing audience. The concept of programming must shift to meet the audience's evolving characteristics and nature. All aging audiences will demand new ideas, images and sounds as they rediscover their own second youth up ahead, beyond their careers. These desires will be recognized by the industrial producers which will move to commercially exploit the large, aging audience, to the greatest possible degree. This aging populace will soon be longing for youthful ideas.

Forget the grandchildren--they seem to exist for the privacy of their own rooms, where they work out late at night on their interactive toys. The kids will choose to communicate with their own kind. Picture-phones await future generations under just about everyone's Christmas tree. How many aging communicators will be capable of mastering the picture-phone's operation? How many aging and elderly women will choose to actively manage the programming options for their family's or their own viewing? Where will they find the money to pay for their new taste in video? How many of these senior viewers will want to originate video of themselves to re-establish their existence in the world?

I'm optimistic about the future. There will be so many aging and elderly viewers by the turn of the Century. They'll all be sitting around staring at a video display of some kind or another. Video will also be in most of the moving vehicles by that time, for those who insist on actually going somewhere while they watch. Both the aging and elderly will gladly sit still, to have video images fired at them through a CRT (the television tube). Technological advances will continue to outstrip our abilities to be critical of changes for the worst. Chip cameras and digital storage devices will become so small they will be implanted inconspicuously in a number of peoples' foreheads. Initially, these video implantations will be in aid of the handicapped and aged, and very useful to secret service agents and private investigators involved in corporate espionage.

I won't hazard a guess on the first year of widespread video implantation in humans. But video will continue to be known as the most immediate, intimate technology for some time to come. Video will continue to be used to soften people up for the computer. The whole human race will add video-computers as important components of their personal communications links with their neighbors and the world. Somewhere within this well-equipped populace there will always be a minority supportive of those who advocate change. This minority will always be critical of programming serving the complacent

majority (television). Video artists will continue to choose to serve this critical minority by providing video featuring alternative models of social behaviour and new perspectives for the complex individual.

Video's future, where will it be? The places for video will be in the home, in the theatre and in its myriad installations--its unlimited attachments to the world. When you grow very old, you will become more and more attached to video as it will certainly be everywhere then, just as it is now. Eventually video may even be attached to you.